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Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 16 December 2016 to 1 March 2017)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2327 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 December 2017 and requested me to report on the implementation of the mandate every 90 days. It covers developments from 16 December 2016 to 1 March 2017 and contains recommendations on the steps to adapt UNMISS to the situation on the ground and to increase the efficiency of the implementation of its mandate.

II. Political and economic developments

Peace process

2. Since the adoption on 16 December 2016 of resolution 2327 (2016), there has been minimal progress towards implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (the peace agreement). Gichira Kibara (Kenya), the new Chair of the National Constitutional Amendment Committee established under chapter I of the peace agreement, visited Juba in December. During his visit, he consulted with members of the Constitutional Amendment Committee and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission on the Amendment Committee's work and the need to develop an action plan for the implementation of the mandate of the Committee. On 15 December, the Ministry of Justice inaugurated the technical committee for the consultative process on the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, in accordance with chapter V of the peace agreement. The technical committee is chaired by the Ministry of Justice and includes representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, the South Sudan Peace Commission, the South Sudan Human Rights Commission and faith-based and civil society organizations. Since its establishment, the technical committee has started mapping conflict patterns and hotspots to be considered for national consultations.

3. On 14 December, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, announced the launch of a national dialogue initiative under his patronage. The President stated that the process would take a three-phased approach starting with grass-roots consultations, followed by regional peace conferences and culminating in a national conference in Juba. He further said that the Transitional Government of National

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Unity would work closely with regional and international partners to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the process. On 16 December, the Transitional National Legislative Assembly endorsed the national dialogue proposal.

4. On 19 December, Mr. Kiir appointed four advisers as patrons of the process and a 26-member National Dialogue Steering Committee comprising parliamentarians, retired military commanders and religious leaders, with the mandate to develop an agenda and timetable for the national dialogue that would not contravene the terms of the peace agreement. The Steering Committee will be assisted by five advisers and a 15-member secretariat representing seven national institutions. In a letter dated 1 March 2017 addressed to Mr. Kiir, Paride Taban, Bishop Emeritus of the Catholic Diocese of Torit, asked to be excused from his role as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, citing his advanced age and previous retirement from official functions.

5. On 21 February, speaking at the opening of the second session of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, Mr. Kiir stressed that the national dialogue, as the chief priority of the Government for 2017, was designed with flexibility and transparency to unite the people of South Sudan and consolidate peace and security. According to the President, other priority tasks for 2017 include implementation of the peace agreement, economic recovery and improved relations with regional and international partners.

6. Mr. Kiir's national dialogue initiative received mixed reactions. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Opposition, led by Riek Machar, welcomed a national dialogue process in principle but raised concerns regarding the political context and implementation modalities, in particular Mr. Kiir's credibility to lead the process. They asserted that national dialogue must be anchored in accountability and justice through the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and be complementary to the peace agreement. The exiled leader of the National Democratic Movement, Lam Akol, argued that peace was a prerequisite for a meaningful bottom-up national dialogue and called for an inclusive national dialogue conference to be held outside the country and facilitated by a neutral entity. Other opposition leaders, including from the Democratic Change Party and the former political detainees, welcomed the initiative, but stressed the need for inclusivity. Civil society and faith-based organizations generally supported the concept of a grass-roots approach to a national dialogue, although some organizations, including the South Sudan Council of Churches, have expressed reservations over the current configuration of the Steering Committee. The voluntary civil society task force on the implementation of the peace agreement discussed the role of civil society organizations in the national dialogue initiative and agreed to consult the population and present their findings to the Steering Committee for consideration.

7. On 29 January, on the margins of the twenty-eighth African Union Summit, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations held a consultative meeting and issued a joint statement expressing deep concern over the continuing spread of fighting, risk of mass atrocities and the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan. The statement called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an inclusive political process. The three organizations encouraged the African Union High Representative for South Sudan, Alpha Oumar Konaré, to undertake active shuttle diplomacy towards ensuring inclusivity in the national dialogue and implementation of the peace agreement, in close consultation with the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Festus Mogae, as well as IGAD and the United Nations.

Other political developments

8. On 14 January, Mr. Kiir issued a decree creating four additional states in greater Upper Nile and Western Equatoria and rearranging state administrative boundaries. The decree now brings the total number of states to 32 from the 28 created by establishment order 36/2015. The pro-Machar SPLM/A in Opposition and the National Democratic Movement condemned the creation of new states. Also in January, Mr. Kiir replaced the governors of Boma, Eastern Nile, Gbudwe, Gogrial, Ruweng and Twic, and appointed governors for the newly established states and renamed states of Akobo, Bieh, Central Upper Nile, Northern Upper Nile, Latjor, Maiwut and Tambura. During their swearing-in ceremony on 20 January, Mr. Kiir urged the new governors to improve intercommunal relations and directed them to lead the national dialogue process in their respective states. In early February, Mr. Kiir also replaced the governors of Imatong and Fashoda.

9. Since February, five senior government and military officials have resigned from their positions, accusing Mr. Kiir and the SPLA command of pursuing an agenda of ethnic domination through the Jieng (Dinka) Council of Elders. These included the SPLM/A in Opposition-nominated Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development, the SPLA Deputy Chief of General Staff for Logistics, the SPLA Head of Military Courts, the SPLA Director of Military Justice and the SPLA Logistic Support Brigade Commander.

Economic developments

10. December became the thirteenth month of triple-digit inflation, with the year-on-year consumer price index estimated at 479.7 per cent, largely driven by the increasing devaluation of the South Sudanese Pound and compounded by continued low oil production. The rapid depreciation of the currency and salary arrears further undermined household purchasing power across South Sudan. On 14 January, Mr. Kiir replaced the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank as well as the Deputy Minister for Finance and Economic Planning. On 23 January, the President replaced the Board of Directors of the state-owned Nile Petroleum Company, followed by the replacement of the Managing Director on 20 February. The President instructed the newly appointed officials to urgently address the deteriorating economic situation. Furthermore, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Japan and the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund concluded its 2016 article IV mission to South Sudan in early December, and called for the implementation of fiscal stabilization measures and prudential action in the public financial management framework to address economic challenges. The Fund urged the authorities to eliminate fuel subsidies and ghost workers on government payrolls and reduce the costs of foreign diplomatic missions, as well as to enforce minimum reserve requirements.

III. Security situation

11. The security situation remained tense across Greater Equatoria, Greater Upper Nile and Western Bahr el-Ghazal, with devastating consequences for the civilian population. Operations of SPLA in southern Central Equatoria and parts of Western Equatoria resulted in significant civilian displacement and reports of serious and systematic human rights violations. Mass displacement has also increased the incidence of sexual violence by militias, armed youth and elements of security forces. Repercussions from the split in the SPLM/A in Opposition and the subsequent realignment among local commanders resulted in periodic fighting and

persistent insecurity in Unity. In Upper Nile, internal tensions led to low-level fighting among Shilluk forces, followed by fighting starting in late-January between predominately Shilluk forces allied with SPLA in Opposition and militias aligned with SPLA near Malakal and in Wau Shilluk, resulting in large-scale civilian displacement. Sporadic clashes between government and opposition forces in Western Bahr el-Ghazal also led to persistent insecurity and sustained civilian displacement.

Greater Equatoria region

12. Greater Equatoria continued to see SPLA operations against armed opposition elements. In Central Equatoria, the deployment of a large number of SPLA soldiers and the presence of armed opposition elements in the Yei area continued to cause insecurity and civilian displacement. Following the deployment of National Security Service personnel to Yei in early December, the security situation in Yei town improved, but insecurity in surrounding areas continued. On 24 December, the National Security Service and an SPLA-affiliated armed group allegedly clashed on the Yei-Maridi road, two kilometres from Yei, resulting in the death of two SPLA soldiers. On 2 January, two male civilians were allegedly detained by SPLA forces in the area and were later found dead. On 6 January, SPLA in Opposition forces reportedly clashed with SPLA in Morobo, south of Yei, escalating fighting in the area. UNMISS conducted three patrols to Yei town, but has faced continuous obstruction from the authorities, preventing patrols to the surrounding areas. In Juba, criminality, looting of civilian property and harassment of civilians, fuelled by a failing economy, were a daily occurrence. During fighting between SPLA and opposition forces starting on 22 January in Mondikolok, Lire Payam, in Kajo Keji County, seven civilians were allegedly killed and one woman raped. Fighting continued on 23 January, with an alleged attack on the Mere police station in Lire Payam, resulting in two casualties. With some 30,000 civilians having fled the area, the small population left in Kajo Keji town consists largely of the elderly, women and children. UNMISS also received reports that Dinka Bor cattle keepers supported by SPLA clashed with armed opposition elements in Kajo Keji and Nyepo Counties. After repeated attempts starting in early February, UNMISS was finally able to gain access to the area during the period 6 to 9 February and found that a large number of civilians had been displaced and that SPLA soldiers had looted houses and arbitrarily arrested civilians.

13. In Eastern Equatoria, insecurity along major roadways remained a concern. On 17 December, one South Sudan National Police Service officer and a child were reportedly killed in an ambush west of Magwe, while a number of SPLA soldiers were reportedly killed in an ambush west of Torit town. Several ambushes were allegedly carried out by armed men in government uniforms against civilian vehicles. On 2 January, suspected SPLA in Opposition forces clashed with SPLA along the Torit-Juba road, west of Torit town, killing three SPLA soldiers and injuring two others. On the same day, suspected SPLA in Opposition elements attacked a prison facility along the Torit-Magwe road, south-west of Torit town. Six prison guards were later reported missing. On 3 January, two fire brigade members were reportedly killed when opposition elements attacked the police post at Lolere, west of Torit town on the Torit-Juba road.

14. In Western Equatoria, South Sudan People's Patriotic Front elements reportedly attacked a military post at Bazungua in Yambio County on 18 December, killing two government-aligned South Sudan National Liberation Movement soldiers. On 28 December, suspected members of the Patriotic Front ambushed an SPLA convoy and killed two SPLA soldiers at Rimenze Boma, north-east of Yambio town. The Government reportedly continued military operations targeting the

Patriotic Front in Rimenze, Bazungua, Bodo and Buzumburu in January. Internally displaced persons from those areas claimed that SPLA soldiers had killed civilians, sexually assaulted women, looted and destroyed property.

Greater Upper Nile region

15. The security situation remained tense in the greater Upper Nile region, with reports of clashes in parts of Upper Nile throughout the reporting period. In late December, fighting broke out between the host community and refugees from the Doro refugee camp in Bunj, Maban County, leading hundreds of refugees to seek protection in the vicinity of UNMISS and United Nations agency compounds. According to local officials, approximately 32 deaths were reported during the fighting. In Nasir, the stand-off between SPLA and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition continued as the two sides exchanged heavy gunfire near the UNMISS base. On 2 January, an SPLA foot patrol came under fire from the SPLA in Opposition close to the UNMISS base, damaging UNMISS accommodation containers and an UNMISS armoured personnel carrier. In subsequent days, UNMISS observed SPLA helicopters bombing and landing near SPLA in Opposition positions and exchange of small arms fire in Kuarenga, west of the UNMISS base. In northern Manyo County, clashes were reported between Aguelek Shilluk forces under the command of Johnson Olony and forces aligned with the National Democratic Movement under Lam Akol on 3 and 4 January. Two senior National Democratic Movement generals, Yohannes Okiech and Gabriel Tanginye, were reportedly killed during the clashes. Between 25 and 28 January, fighting took place between SPLA and General Olony's forces on the west bank of the Nile near Malakal, causing significant civilian displacement. SPLA heavily bombarded a position in Burkiny, south of Wau Shilluk. Heavy fighting reportedly also took place in Doleib Hill. On 30 January, fighting started between SPLA and opposition forces in the Renk area. On 8 February, SPLA reportedly clashed with Aguelek forces near their stronghold areas of Owachi (20 km south-west of Malakal town) and Tonga (80 km west of Malakal), resulting in significant casualties on both sides. Clashes were also reported in the Owachi area on 13 February with reports that SPLA had succeeded in taking control of the area. On 20 February, SPLA clashed with the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in the general area of Canal (Khorfulus), Panyikang County. In Malakal, UNMISS observed the arrival of SPLA reinforcements and resupplies in the days leading up to 9 February, when UNMISS heard intermittent firing of heavy calibre weapons from the SPLA base north of the UNMISS base in Malakal towards the general direction of Wau Shilluk. UNMISS observed artillery landing on the west bank as well as around the SPLA base on the east bank of the Nile. In the following days, UNMISS observed SPLA moving both soldiers and civilians, as well as what appeared to be looted goods, from Wau Shilluk to Ditang by boat. The build-up of forces and reports of SPLA troop movements towards opposition positions north of Malakal indicate that continued confrontations are likely.

16. Insecurity in southern and central Unity persisted, with reports of troop mobilization, clashes between warring factions, looting and destruction of civilian property. The pro-Machar Opposition leadership claimed that a joint force of SPLA and opposition forces aligned with Taban Deng Gai attacked pro-Machar opposition positions in Koch and Mayendit Counties between 12 and 18 December, which resulted in at least 14 civilians killed and the looting of civilian property. On 27 December, pro-Machar opposition forces detained the government-appointed Panyijar County Commissioner after he landed in Ganyiel, Panyijar County. The pro-Machar opposition later claimed that the County Commissioner had defected. Separately, an SPLA colonel, with a number of SPLA soldiers, defected to the pro-Machar opposition in Rubkona. A road ambush allegedly committed by armed men

affiliated with the defected colonel near Mayom Junction on 10 January reportedly resulted in two SPLA soldiers killed and four others injured. In southern Unity, attacks and counter-attacks by government-aligned forces and the pro-Machar opposition continued in areas around Leer and Mayendit Counties, reportedly resulting in at least 10 civilians dead.

17. In Jonglei, clashes between SPLA and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition broke out in Panyok, Uror County, an opposition-controlled area, on 15 February. The SPLA consolidated its position in Yuai with SPLA reinforcement from Bor, including heavy equipment. Meanwhile, there were reports of insecurity on the Pibor-Gumuruk road. Two civilians were killed and five were wounded in an ambush at Kavagoch village. Armed men also attacked an SPLA vehicle and a cattle truck between Tangjon and Black Rock.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

18. Sporadic clashes along established fault lines in Western Bahr el-Ghazal and reports of general lawlessness and uniformed men killing and harassing civilians around Wau continued. In other parts of the Bahr el-Ghazal region, incidents of cattle raiding, some involving SPLA soldiers, were reported. While the Government maintained control of the major towns in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, armed opposition elements remain present in the surrounding areas. SPLA and government-aligned groups continued to clash with opposition elements, including SPLA in Opposition, south of Wau, particularly around Bisellia and Bussere. Opposition forces were also reportedly active on the outskirts of Raga town and, on 30 December, the Governor of Lol was reportedly ambushed in an alleged targeted attack. Meanwhile, UNMISS access to areas beyond Wau and Aweil remained restricted by local authorities. In January, violence between pastoralists from Tonj and Gogrial, supported by government forces, and farmers in Wau aided by SPLA in Opposition elements led to killings, property damage, looting and civilian displacement.

Intercommunal conflicts

19. Incidents of intercommunal violence in Western Bahr el-Ghazal included attacks by armed Dinka cattle keepers in Melen, Wadalelo, Kwajena and Jur River Counties, which displaced approximately 5,500 civilians who fled to Wau town. To curb the violence, local authorities agreed on the return of pastoralists to their states of origin and identification and prosecution of those having caused insecurity. Insecurity in Jonglei increased during the dry season, involving cattle-raiding incidents in the greater Bor area. On 16 January, a cattle-raiding attack in Duk County resulted in 12 civilians killed. Six Ethiopian children were allegedly abducted by Murle cattle keepers in Pochala. On 19 January, Ethiopian authorities gave a 15-day deadline to Murle cattle keepers to return the abducted Ethiopian children. Peace dividends generated by a series of community consultations in Jonglei and Boma from May to December 2016 are at risk of being undermined by a resurgence of cattle raiding and child abductions. In Unity, the long-standing land and border conflict between Koch and Rubkona Counties was characterized by inter-county cattle raids and attacks. Local officials in Buaw, Koch County, claimed that armed youth from Rubkona had carried out cattle raids, resulting in the death of civilians. Intercommunal tensions in Rubkway, outside Leer, also led to civilian casualties. In Lakes, intercommunal tensions and cattle raiding remained a concern. On 30 December, 15 people were reportedly killed in fighting between Belle youth from Barghel Payam and Gok youth from Cueibet County.

IV. Humanitarian situation

20. During the reporting period, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan deteriorated significantly, with famine declared in parts of Unity, where just over 100,000 people are facing starvation. A further one million people elsewhere in the country are on the brink of famine. Since January, more than 108,600 people, the majority of whom are women and children, have fled South Sudan to Uganda. This brought the number of refugees in Uganda to more than 755,000 and the total number of South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Uganda, to more than 1.54 million. Civilians also continued to be internally displaced, including as a result of clashes in and around Wau Shilluk. As at early February, there were more than 1.9 million internally displaced persons across the country.

21. Food insecurity and malnutrition continued to escalate during the reporting period. On 20 February, localized famine was declared in Leer and Mayendit Counties in Unity, with Koch deemed to be at high risk of famine. Some 4.9 million people in South Sudan are now severely food insecure, with this number expected to rise to 5.5 million at the height of the lean season in July if nothing is done to curb the severity and spread of the food crisis. More than one million children are estimated to be acutely malnourished. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report released on 20 February estimates that 14 out of 23 assessed counties have global acute malnutrition rates at or above the emergency threshold of 15 per cent, with some areas as high as 42 per cent.

22. Communicable diseases continued to spread. A cholera outbreak, which began in June 2016, continued in Lakes, Jonglei, Unity and Central Equatoria, with 5,085 cholera cases (55 per cent women), including 105 deaths (a case fatality rate of 2.06 per cent), reported in 12 counties as at 17 February. Malaria remained the leading cause of morbidity, followed by acute watery diarrhoea and acute respiratory infection. There were rising cases of the deadly tropical disease kala-azar, with 236 cases (138 of which were women) reported by 12 February. Measles cases have been confirmed in three counties since the start of the year and an active outbreak is ongoing in Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal. Violence and displacement in the greater Equatoria region have affected populations with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS and have disrupted access to life-saving treatment. As part of an ongoing HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, UNMISS/UN Cares sensitized 61,330 persons (41,010 men and 20,320 women), in addition to 25,660 internally displaced persons (including 10,990 women) in UNMISS protection of civilians sites.

23. The operating environment remained challenging and dangerous throughout the reporting period, with insecurity due to planned or ongoing military operations resulting in ad hoc relocations of personnel and disruption of aid delivery in areas of high need. At least 116 aid workers were relocated from Central Equatoria, Upper Nile and Unity in December and at least 42 aid workers were relocated in January from Upper Nile and Unity. During the fighting in the Doro refugee camp in Maban County in December, humanitarian compounds and facilities, including health clinics and schools, were vandalized and looted. The fighting in Wau Shilluk forced humanitarian organizations to relocate aid workers and suspend key activities; humanitarian compounds and supplies were reportedly looted. It has also been reported that humanitarian compounds were looted during clashes in Yuai in February, with aid workers relocated to Motot and Walgak. In December, two senior aid workers, including the Country Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council, were deported from South Sudan, bringing the number of aid workers declared persona non grata, expelled or deported in November and December to four. In

January, at least three aid workers were killed, bringing the total number of aid workers killed since the crisis started to 70.

24. Humanitarian actors continued to respond, despite the challenges. In 2016, more than 5.1 million people had been reached with humanitarian assistance and protection and the humanitarian response plan was more than 85 per cent funded, with $1.1 billion received out of $1.3 billion required. On 21 February, the 2017 humanitarian response plan was launched, appealing for $1.6 billion to provide life-saving assistance and protection to 5.8 million people in dire need across the country. A concerted, multisectoral scale-up of the response is under way in counties affected by, and at risk of, famine.

V. Implementation of the mandated tasks of the Mission

A. Protection of civilians

25. In implementing its mandate to ensure that civilians, particularly displaced persons, are protected from physical violence, UNMISS continued to follow a coordinated three-tiered approach, including through the establishment of a protective environment and through support to the political process exercised through the good offices of my Special Representative. Following his arrival in January, my new Special Representative has engaged senior national leadership, including the President, as well as state-level officials, community leaders and the media, in field visits to Rumbek, Wau, Bentiu, Leer, Malakal and Yambio. He has stressed the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities to allow displaced civilians to return to their homes and for UNMISS freedom of movement to protect civilians. Along with the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, he also engaged with key national actors outside the country on the margins of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in January to promote a return to the peace process. While my Special Representative continues to engage stakeholders inside South Sudan on reinvigorating the peace process, the Special Envoy leads our engagement with regional and international partners and national stakeholders located outside the country.

26. Under the first tier, protection through dialogue and political engagement, UNMISS delivered 41 workshops on subjects related to social cohesion, reconciliation and conflict management. Over 5,300 participants (of which 1,300 were women) were reached, including state and county officials, traditional leaders and youth and women's representatives in communities across the country and in UNMISS protection of civilians sites. Long-standing grievances and accountability related to abuses committed during the 2010 general election in Aweil East were addressed through a community-led forum facilitated by UNMISS. In Western Lakes, UNMISS facilitated a forum for state legislators addressing principal root causes of intercommunal conflict, including the consequences of high bride prices. A series of community consultations between the Dinka Bor of Jonglei and the Murle of Boma that began in May 2016 culminated in a peace conference in Pibor in December, supported by UNMISS, UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund. The conference proposed solutions to address conflict manifestations, including cattle raiding and child abductions, livelihood options and inter-state collaboration on peacebuilding projects. In Yambio, UNMISS facilitated a workshop on the conflict management roles of youth, which was attended by members of the local youth union and current and former combatants. UNMISS conducted integrated missions to Yei in December and February and facilitated a dialogue forum on civil-military relations, attended by representatives from the state government and security organs and traditional, religious, youth and women leaders.

The UNMISS Aweil and Kuacjok field offices supported a cattle migration and cross-border conflict management conference between Aweil and Gogrial in January, resulting in an agreement on key principles to manage inter-state pastoral migration.

27. Under the second tier, protection of civilians under threat of physical violence, UNMISS continued to protect 223,926 internally displaced persons in six UNMISS protection of civilians sites nationwide, including 120,011 in Bentiu, 38,942 in Juba, 33,191 in Malakal, 681 in Melut, 1,976 in Bor and 28,925 in Wau.

28. As at 24 February, a total of 1,969 security incidents were reported in protection of civilians sites and 2,930 persons (of which 117 were women) were detained in three holding facilities in Juba, Bentiu and Malakal. To mitigate risks of violence and communal tensions in the sites, UNMISS conducted training and sensitization campaigns with residents, including community leaders, to underscore their responsibility to maintain the civilian character of the sites and to cooperate in operations to search for weapons. UNMISS, together with humanitarian partners, supported the process of selecting community leaders in the Bentiu and Malakal sites to promote inclusive community representation.

29. In Juba, UNMISS established dismounted integrated patrols, including military, police and civilian personnel, to facilitate engagement with host communities and internally displaced persons. During the period under review, UNMISS reported the confiscation of an increased amount of live ammunition in the weapons-free zone in Juba and a concurrent reduction of attacks against civilians and criminal activities. UNMISS conducted preliminary assessments to establish weapons-free zones around the Bentiu and Bor protection of civilians sites.

30. UNMISS continued to focus on proactive deployment and patrols aimed at deterring and pre-empting violence against civilians beyond the UNMISS protection of civilians sites. A total of 10,340 patrols were conducted during the reporting period, including to Kajo Keji and Yei. The temporary protection area in Leer, southern Unity, continues to offer refuge to internally displaced persons since the resumption of violence in August. UNMISS police continued weekly consultative meetings with the South Sudan National Police Service, community leaders and civil society on protection of civilians. UNMISS regularly conducted patrols outside the protection of civilians sites in Bentiu, Bor, Juba, Malakal and Wau to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and other crimes.

31. UNMISS intensified its efforts to enhance public awareness on zero-tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. As part of the 16 Days Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women, UNMISS, together with United Nations and national partners, articulated key messages around the campaign theme, "from peace at home to peace in South Sudan", and reached out to community watch groups, religious leaders and school teachers, whose perspectives influence gender relations and behaviour patterns of community members. Within the framework of the Global Open Day for Women and Peace dialogue initiative between the United Nations leadership and women leaders, UNMISS facilitated a women's peace forum in Wau, with similar events being planned in other locations.

B. Monitoring and investigating human rights

32. During the reporting period, UNMISS continued to monitor, verify, investigate and report on alleged human rights violations and abuses, as well as alleged breaches of international humanitarian law. UNMISS also focused on monitoring, investigating and reporting on incidents of hate speech and incitement to violence.

Ongoing insecurity across the country and denials of access by the authorities continued to restrict the ability of UNMISS to monitor and verify alleged violations and abuses, including unlawful killings of civilians, cases of torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment, conflict-related sexual violence including rape and gang-rape, arbitrary arrest and detention, looting and destruction of civilian property, forced displacement of the civilian population and restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly. Although both government and opposition forces were responsible for human rights violations and abuses, government forces, including SPLA soldiers and National Security Service officers, committed most of the cases documented by UNMISS. This may in part be because UNMISS was not able to access all the areas controlled by SPLM/A in Opposition or other armed groups.

33. Between 14 and 17 February, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights visited Juba and Malakal and met with representatives from the Government, security forces, the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, faith-based and civil society organizations, humanitarian partners and victims of human rights violations. In a press statement dated 17 February, he condemned the human rights situation, stating that SPLA had engaged in what could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and called for accountability for atrocity crimes, an end to arbitrary and prolonged detention and the safety of human rights defenders.

34. In December, the Mission established a working group on the prevention of mass atrocities to monitor hate speech through public statements made by South Sudanese leaders and on social media and local radio stations and to formulate a coherent United Nations-wide action plan to mitigate the risk of mass atrocities, supported by a Headquarters-level working group. In addition, UNMISS Radio Miraya has begun broadcasting the third series of a radio drama aimed at countering hate speech and incitement. The Mission also provided resource staff to train 25 South Sudanese journalists on conflict-sensitive journalism and countering hate speech at a workshop held by UNDP in November.

35. While fighting between SPLA and SPLM/A in Opposition and allied armed groups continued to result in human rights violations and abuses across the country, the greater Equatoria and Upper Nile regions and Western Bahr el-Ghazal were most affected during the reporting period. The situation in Yei in Central Equatoria continued to be of serious concern. In early January, for instance, two SPLA soldiers allegedly opened fire at a funeral, killing at least one civilian and wounding five others. On 12 January, SPLA soldiers detained and shot at a group of 10 Kakwa youths, killing four of them instantly and injuring four others. SPLA soldiers detained a doctor who treated the injured and accused him of providing medical treatment to rebels, prevented the medical evacuation of two of the injured and detained three carers travelling with the men. At least one of the injured men later died of his injuries. SPLA soldiers and members of the allied Mathiang Anyoor militia were also reportedly responsible for other killings and burning down homes around Yei. On 16 January, for instance, Mathiang Anyoor reportedly burned down at least 14 houses in Lutaya and the Catholic diocesan pastoral centre. Elsewhere in Central Equatoria, during violence in Kajo Keji, there were reports of SPLA attacks on civilians including killings, conflict-related sexual violence and burning down of homes, resulting in massive displacement of the civilian population. On 11 February, in Kubi village SPLA indiscriminately attacked civilians, raped an unconfirmed number of women and detained approximately 48 people, all but four of whom were later released.

36. In Western Equatoria in early January, SPLA soldiers attacked Banzungu Payam and the surrounding area, killed and injured civilians, raped women and burned down property. SPLA soldiers frequently accused civilians of supporting the

"rebels". The attacks resulted in large-scale civilian displacement, with the Catholic Church compound in Rimenze hosting at least 5,000 internally displaced persons by mid-January.

37. At least five civilians reportedly died as a result of fighting between SPLA and SPLM/A in Opposition in Upper Nile on 25 January and over 20 were injured in Wau Shilluk on 27 and 28 January. According to witness testimonies, SPLA conducted house-to-house searches, torched homes, looted property and shot dead a man in the market area and a woman in her home; a burned body was found in the remains of a house. Humanitarian partners reported the arrival of about 18,000 internally displaced persons in Kodok (50 km north-west of Malakal) and over 13,500 in Aburoc (25 km north-west of Kodok) as a result of ongoing hostilities. SPLA has repeatedly prevented UNMISS from travelling to Wau Shilluk and to Kodok to verify these reports.

38. There was a spike in attacks by unidentified armed groups on civilians during the reporting period, particularly in Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria. These included an attack by a group of armed men on a vehicle traveling from Juba to Torit at Khordilep, about 24 km from Torit on 16 December. The attackers set the vehicle on fire and killed 8 of the 11 passengers. In an attack in Jonglei on 25 December, armed men shot seven civilians dead and wounded two others in Baping village, Nyuak Payam, Twic East County.

39. Human rights violations continued to arise in the administration of justice. UNMISS documented repeated cases of prolonged and arbitrary detention, proxy detention, executive interference in the justice system, arrests for civil matters and the detention of minors alongside adults, and detention conditions failed to meet international human rights standards. UNMISS also documented cases of politically motivated detention. The National Security Service continued to hold individuals incommunicado with no access to family members or to a lawyer in its detention facilities, including in Jebel, Juba. SPLM/A in Opposition spokesperson James Gadtek Dak has been detained incommunicado by the National Security Service since his deportation from Nairobi to South Sudan on 3 November. Mr. Dak had refugee status in Kenya.

40. The authorities continued to crack down on freedom of expression, assembly and association. On 24 January, SPLA soldiers arrested four journalists in Juba, one from UNMISS Radio Miraya and three others who were covering the provision of free medical services by a team of Moroccan military doctors. The soldiers held and interrogated the journalists for five hours and accused three of them of broadcasting coverage critical of the Government. In Wau, National Security Service officers detained 11 civil servants, including two women, on 10 and 11 January, and held them incommunicado for two days. The civil servants were allegedly detained in relation to a dispute over reassignment to Lol following the division of Western Bahr el-Ghazal. Two were subsequently released, while the other nine were forcibly transferred to Raja in Lol.

41. In line with resolution 2327 (2016), UNMISS continued to monitor, investigate, verify and report specifically and publicly on violations and abuses committed against children. During the reporting period, a total of 38 incidents, affecting 1,084 children (582 boys and 502 girls), were documented and verified in South Sudan through the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. Most of the incidents reported named SPLA and SPLA in Opposition, both Riek Machar and Taban Deng Gai factions, as the perpetrators. The most recurrent documented violations included the recruitment and use of children by :he parties to the conflict (48 per cent of incidents), killing and maiming of children (21 per cent), attacks on or military use

of schools (12 per cent), sexual violence against minor girls (9 per cent), attacks on hospitals (5 per cent) and the abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access (5 per cent). In December, children were most exposed to violations in Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria (where 46 and 36 per cent, respectively, of all violations were reported). In January, children were most exposed to violations in Unity (55 per cent of all violations recorded).

C. Creating conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance

42. UNMISS presence in Yambio (Western Equatoria) and Torit (Eastern Equatoria) helped to create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance inside the towns. UNMISS increased patrolling in and around Torit town in the light of the deteriorating situation there. In Western Equatoria, UNMISS undertook a patrol with humanitarian partners to assess the situation of internally displaced persons in Rimenze. The sustained presence of UNMISS in Leer town, through its temporary operating base, enabled humanitarian organizations to carry out missions to assist displaced persons sheltering in the temporary protection area there. Furthermore, UNMISS military undertook additional patrols in areas around the Bentiu protection of civilians site in line with the "beyond Bentiu" strategy. UNMISS also worked with humanitarian actors to develop contingency plans in Juba, Bor, Bentiu, Malakal, Melut, Wau, Torit and Yambio, including the pre-positioning of life-saving items in United Nations premises.

43. With the onset of the dry season, UNMISS reinforced efforts to create conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance. UNMISS maintained approximately 530 km of main supply roads across the country, enabling humanitarian organizations to pre-position aid supplies during the dry season. When requested as a last resort, UNMISS provided force protection for food drops, convoys and other humanitarian activities in various locations. UNMISS patrols, aimed at accessing areas where violence, displacement and human rights violations had been reported, were frequently denied freedom of movement.

44. The Mine Action Service deployed 28 mine action teams to survey and clear roads, airstrips and helicopter landing sites to facilitate security and humanitarian access. A total area of 2,161,713 square metres was surveyed and released, in addition to the removal and destruction of 16,666 explosive hazards and 137,216 pieces of small arms ammunition.

D. Supporting the implementation of the peace agreement

45. Overall progress in the implementation of the peace agreement has been minimal. UNMISS police provided support to the South Sudan National Police Service on the establishment of the Joint Integrated Police, including the development of an overarching strategy, the concept of operations and terms of reference. The joint management team comprising officers from the South Sudan National Police Service and the South Sudan National Police Service in Opposition, led by First Vice President Taban Deng Gai, in close coordination with UNMISS police, developed and approved a training plan and curriculum for the Joint Integrated Police with UNDP providing logistical support. So far, 66 senior officers (4 women) have been undergoing training in the police training centre and preparations are under way for the training of the remaining 1,121 (216 women) members, who are currently under review in accordance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

46. On 25 January, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism held its first board meeting since 30 June 2016 with representation from SPLA, the pro-Taban faction of SPLA in Opposition and former political detainees. Meanwhile, with the deployment of two new Monitoring and Verification Teams of the Mechanism to UNMISS bases at Pibor and Leer, a total of 11 teams are now operational. Lack of freedom of movement and security clearances for patrols remain a challenge.

47. The Secretariat continued to engage with the African Union Commission regarding the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, in full respect with the African Union's lead responsibility in this matter. Officials of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat and the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission met both in New York and in Addis Ababa. The Office of Legal Affairs provided suggestions for consideration in the preparation of draft constitutive legal instruments for the Hybrid Court. The Secretariat remains committed to providing technical assistance in setting up the Hybrid Court and for the implementation of other aspects of chapter V of the peace agreement, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2241 (2015), 2252 (2015) and 2327 (2016).

VI. Mission staffing and status of deployment of surge capacity

48. As at 23 February, the strength of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,555, including 837 international staff members, 1,350 national staff members and 386 United Nations Volunteers. The UNMISS police strength stood at 1,561 of the authorized 2,101 officers, including 665 individual police officers, 67 corrections officers and 829 personnel in formed police units. The deployment of 160 Rwandese formed police unit personnel to Juba is pending final clearances. The deployment of 170 Ghanaian formed police unit personnel has been delayed owing to lack of readiness of troops and equipment. The UNMISS troop strength stood at 11,746 military personnel, including 180 military observers, 368 military staff officers and 11,198 military contingent personnel. Following the withdrawal of the Kenyan infantry battalion, a 255-strong advance party of the incoming Bangladeshi infantry battalion deploying to replace the Kenyans arrived. The Cambodian level II hospital in Juba has been replaced by an Indian level II-plus hospital. In addition, the induction of military engineers from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is ongoing and will be followed by the induction of level II hospital personnel in April/May. UNMISS has been experiencing delays in the deployment of uniformed personnel since December because of changed entry requirements imposed by the Government of South Sudan, which led in February to the stranding of over 200 uniformed personnel in Entebbe, Uganda, or Nairobi awaiting re-entry clearances, some for over a month. As at 23 February, 45 police personnel, three corrections officers and 95 military personnel were awaiting visa and/or re-entry clearances.

49. There has been minimal progress in the deployment of the regional protection force since the Transitional Government of National Unity conveyed its unconditional consent for the immediate deployment of the force in November. The allocation of a plot of land for the force near United Nations House in Juba is well under way. Nonetheless, there are critical outstanding issues to be resolved with the Government, including the mandate of the force to protect Juba International Airport and the allocation of a second piece of land for the force north of Juba. The Government has yet to respond to the Mission's request to convene a joint security assessment of the airport. Reconnaissance teams from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Rwanda visited South Sudan in preparation for the deployment of the force.

50. During the reporting period, UNMISS continued to implement the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse pursuant to his report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/69/779). In addition, the arrival of an UNMISS Military Gender Adviser enhances the gender expertise of the Mission's military component and its readiness to respond to sexual and gender-based violence cases. UNMISS also trained 47 Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism officers (6 women) on gender, sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

VII. Violations of the status-of-forces agreement, international humanitarian law and security of United Nations personnel

51. During the reporting period, UNMISS recorded 48 violations of the status-of-forces agreement, 22 of which were restrictions of movement affecting UNMISS personnel and contractors engaged in tasks exclusively related to the Mission mandate. Other violations recorded by UNMISS included imposition of new immigration conditions specific to UNMISS personnel for entry into South Sudan, levying of fees for issuance of visas and work permits for UNMISS personnel and international contractors and their employees, four physical assaults on UNMISS personnel and UNMISS international contractors, one direct threat to open fire on members of an UNMISS patrol team returning to the UNMISS base in Bor and nine cases of arrest and detention. The arrest and detention violations included harassment, temporary detention and questioning by the authorities of an UNMISS radio journalist while on duty and the prolonged detention of three staff members, including another UNMISS radio journalist, arrested in 2014 without charges. The National Security Service has denied access to UNMISS to visit them since December 2015. UNMISS also reported the forcible entry into UNMISS premises in Bentiu and abduction of an individual by an unspecified number of SPLA soldiers and the forceful boarding and search of UNMISS aircraft by an unspecified number of SPLA soldiers in Malakal to verify the identity of a passenger. The Mission continues to notify the host Government of the violations of the status-of-forces agreement through notes verbales and in meetings with relevant officials. A monthly matrix of incidents is also shared with the Government.

52. In an effort to enhance understanding of the UNMISS mandate, the Mission launched a comprehensive communications strategy, including greater interaction between the media and Mission senior leadership and the production of weekly radio programmes on UNMISS Radio Miraya. To further expand coverage, radio content is being distributed to community radio stations for re-broadcast, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

VIII. Financial aspects

53. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/281, appropriated the amount of $1,081,788,400 for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. As at 13 February 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMISS Special Account amount to $574.8 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amount to $1,980.0 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs for contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations and recommendations

54. I remain deeply alarmed by the continued violence between government and opposition forces in several parts of South Sudan, particularly across the greater Equatoria and Upper Nile regions as well as in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, which have resulted in a dire crisis, with significant civilian displacements, serious and systematic reported human rights violations and abuses, and famine.

55. Many of those who fled the ongoing violence have given harrowing accounts of killings of civilians, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment, conflict-related sexual violence including rape and gang-rape, and looting and destruction of civilian property. I call on all political and military actors to immediately cease hostilities across the country and remind the Government of its obligation to prevent these horrendous crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

56. Continued insecurity has led to a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. The number of people on the brink of starvation or forced to flee from their homes is staggering. Urgent action is needed to prevent further atrocities and ensure humanitarian access to address the desperate needs. I urge all members of the international community to lend support, both through their influence on the parties to the conflict and by funding humanitarian operations.

57. UNMISS has, in an effort to protect civilians from physical violence and establish a protective environment, intensified its presence and active patrolling in areas at risk of conflict and with high concentrations of displaced persons. Yet, the Mission and its partners continue to face numerous access restrictions, including the obstruction of patrols and humanitarian operations and the denial and delay of entry into the country of United Nations personnel, which prevent UNMISS from fulfilling its core mandated tasks. I welcome Mr. Kiir's renewed pledge to restore freedom of movement for UNMISS and humanitarian actors, but this must be translated into concrete action on the ground. This is an issue that also requires a strong intervention from the Security Council, which receives monthly reports on restrictions of movement and access imposed on UNMISS. I look forward, as well, to the full support of IGAD and the African Union, and intend to engage with them actively as part of the ongoing efforts to remove the many impediments that are crippling the implementation of the mandate of UNMISS and making it extremely challenging to deliver support to the millions of South Sudanese in need of assistance.

58. I urge the Government to expedite facilitating the deployment of the authorized regional protection force as an important confidence-building measure and a step towards enhancing security in Juba. Continued political and diplomatic support from regional and international partners to help create an environment conducive to the expeditious deployment of the regional protection force is equally critical.

59. Killing, assault and harassment of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers are not only a violation of international law but represent unforgiveable acts committed against people who have left their own countries to serve the people of South Sudan. I call upon Mr. Kiir and Mr. Machar to issue clear and public orders to their respective forces that such acts must cease immediately and that those found guilty of committing such offences will face justice in an expeditious manner.

60. I have welcomed the launch by Mr. Kiir of a national dialogue process proposed to start at the grass-roots level and culminate at the national level. I note his call on regional and international partners to support the process so as to

enhance its credibility and effectiveness. It is my expectation and earnest hope that the dialogue would be conducted with a genuine commitment to restoring peace and in a manner that promotes national reconciliation and intercommunal harmony among all groups and interests across South Sudan. In this respect, I am deeply concerned that, in variance with its statement on the national dialogue, the Government is actively participating in the continuous escalation of the armed conflict, with all the dire human consequences I have referred to. Clearly, a national dialogue is incompatible with the current situation, in which the country is embroiled in an armed conflict stoked by ethnic antagonisms and the protection and freedoms of civilians are profoundly constrained or violated. For the national dialogue to be viable, armed hostilities must cease across South Sudan, the dialogue must be guided by an impartial entity that enjoys broad nation-wide acceptance and the process must be inclusive of all South Sudanese stakeholders. The Government must create conditions in which South Sudanese of all backgrounds and political persuasions feel sufficiently free, and sufficiently protected, to participate in the national dialogue and to express their views without fear.

61. During a joint consultative meeting on the margins of the twenty-eighth African Union Summit, the African Union, IGAD and the United Nations unequivocally expressed deep concern over the continuing spread of fighting and the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan. Stating our continued collective commitment to the search for lasting peace, security and stability in the country, we affirmed that there can only be a political solution to the conflict, within the framework of the 2015 peace agreement.

62. It is the responsibility of the country's leaders to make the decisions necessary to achieve progress towards sustainable peace. I am encouraged by my meeting with Mr. Kiir on the margins of the African Union Summit, during which we reaffirmed our determination to enhance cooperation in support of the South Sudan peace process. The United Nations also remains firmly committed to working closely with the African Union High Representative for South Sudan, Alpha Oumar Konaré; the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Festus Mogae; IGAD member States; and other partners to ensure inclusivity in the implementation of the peace agreement and the proposed national dialogue process.

63. Lastly, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation for the unwavering commitment of UNMISS personnel, who, under the able leadership of my Special Representative, David Shearer, continue to protect hundreds of thousands of civilians, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and promote an inclusive political process. In particular, I thank the troop- and police-contributing countries that have provided essential uniformed personnel and assets to the Mission. I further commend the United Nations country team and non-governmental organization partners for their courage and sacrifice to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance to the population, often in perilous circumstances.